



Ron Stewart Preserve Plan Extension and Red Hill Elk Herd



Photo Courtesy Matt Jonas

- Elk in Colorado 8-10,000 years
- Legacy of hunting by humans
- Elk nearly extirpated due to unrestricted market hunting



Potential Conservation Areas for Boulder County, CNHP 2009

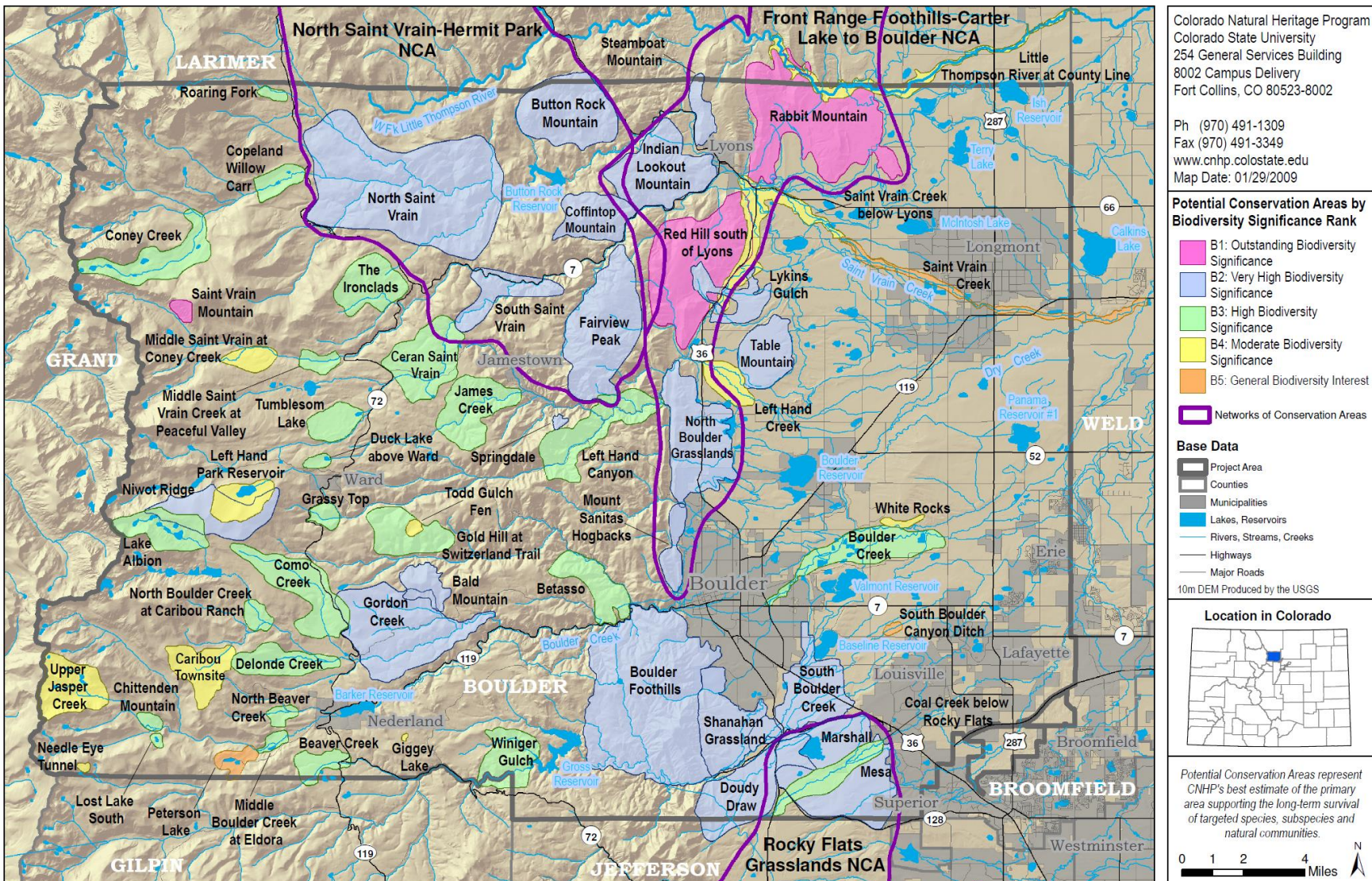
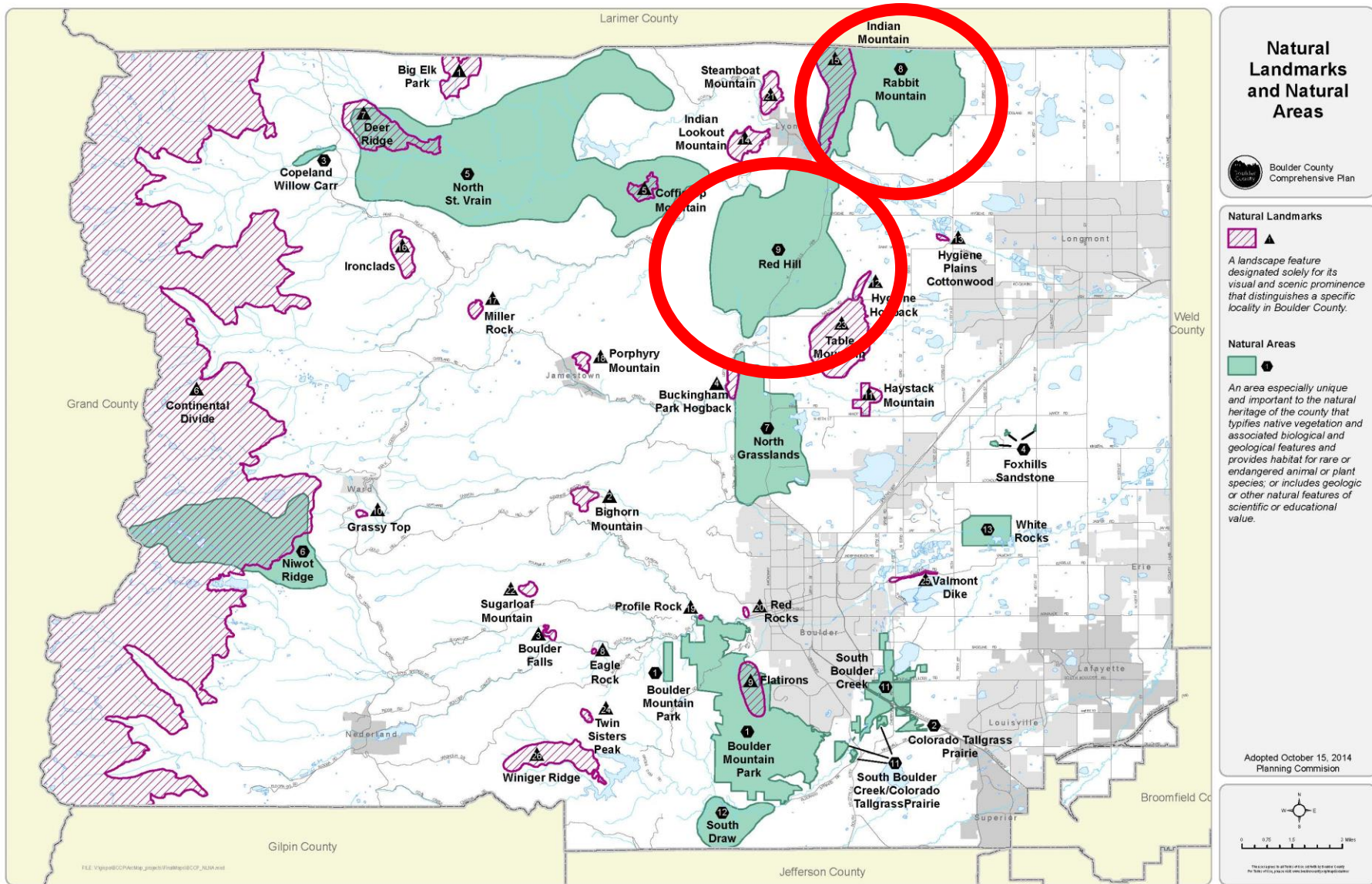


Figure 14. CNHP Potential Conservation Areas and Networks of Conservation Areas in Boulder County

Environmental Resources at Rabbit Mountain and Red Hill

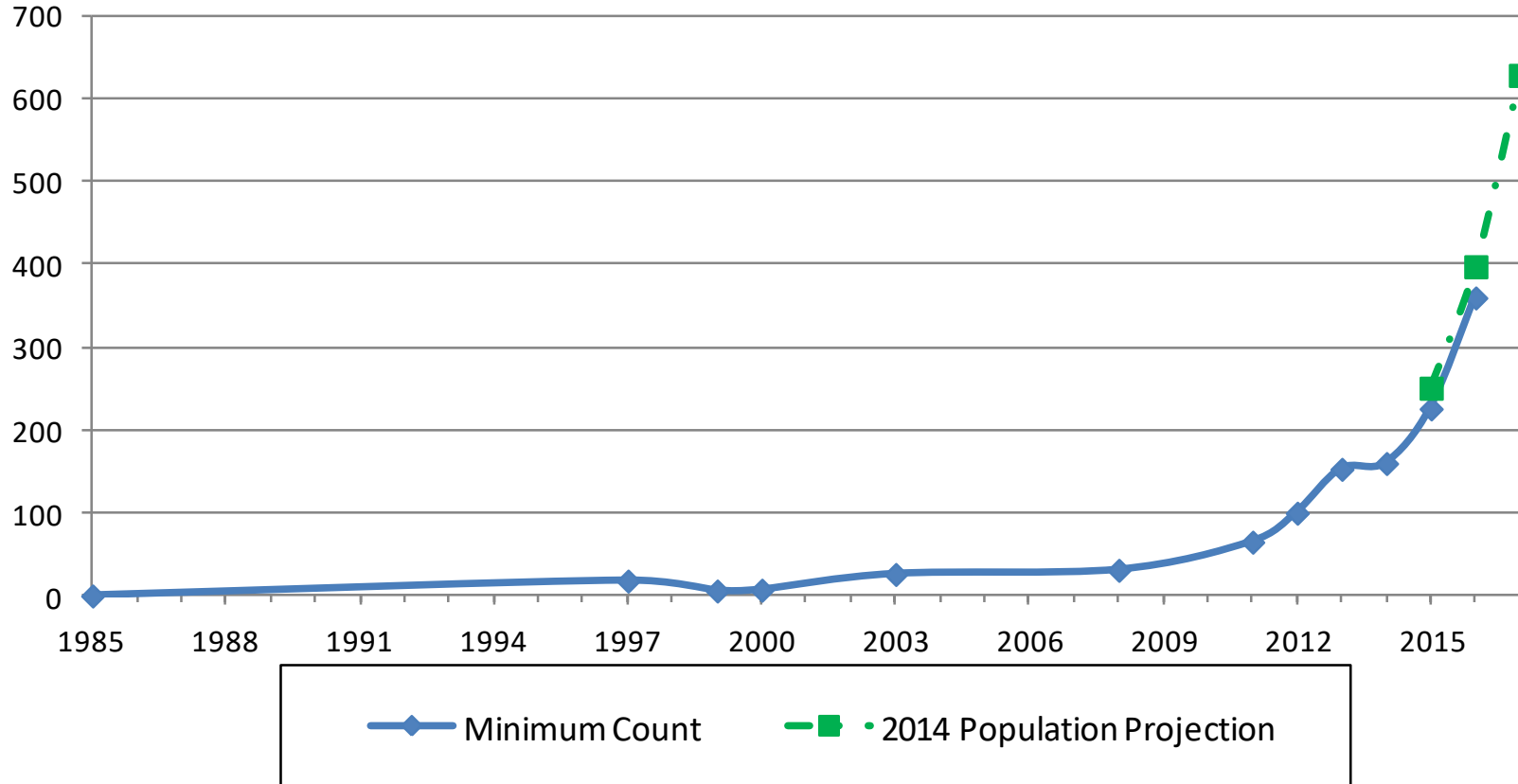


Elk at Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain

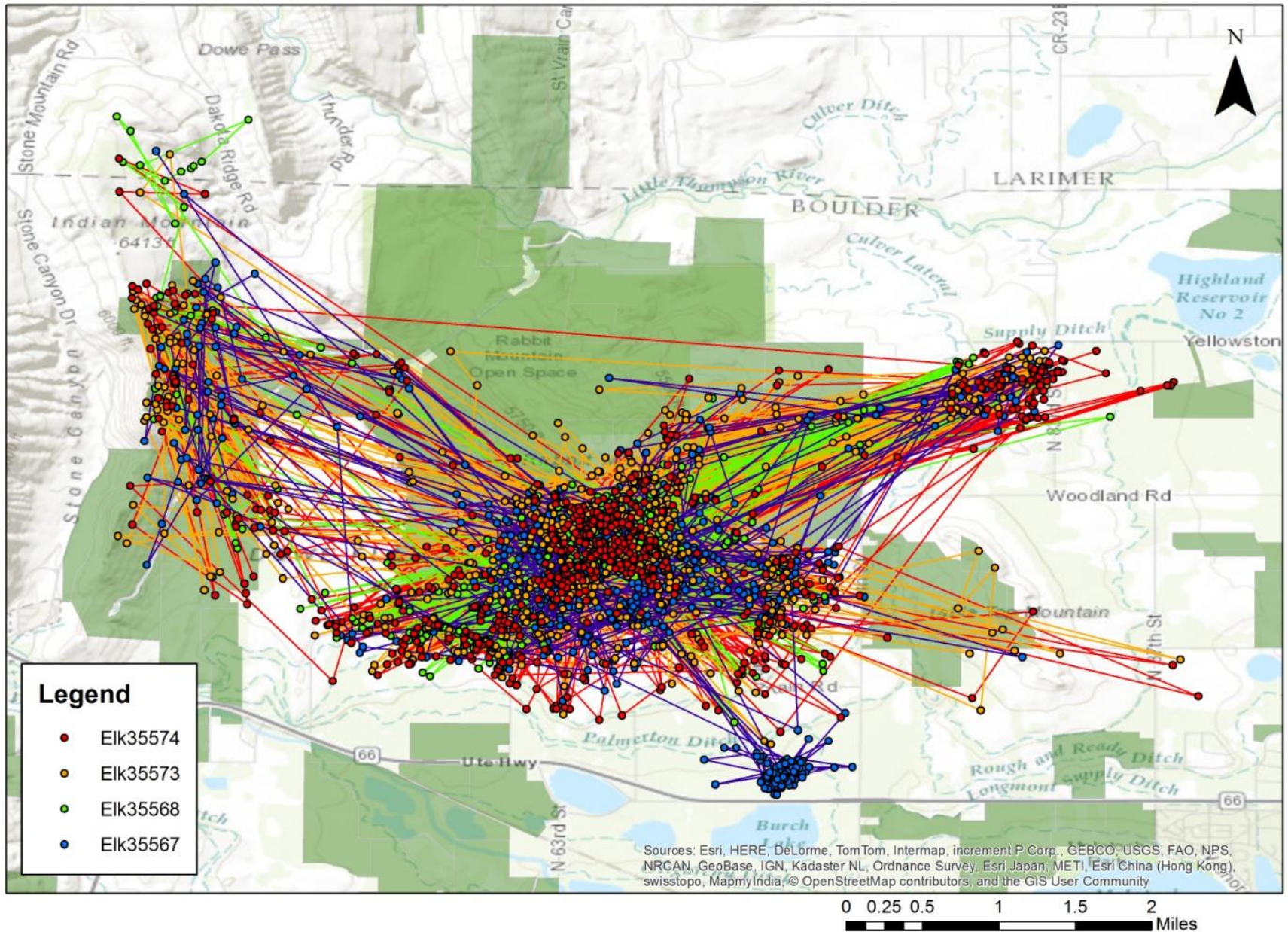


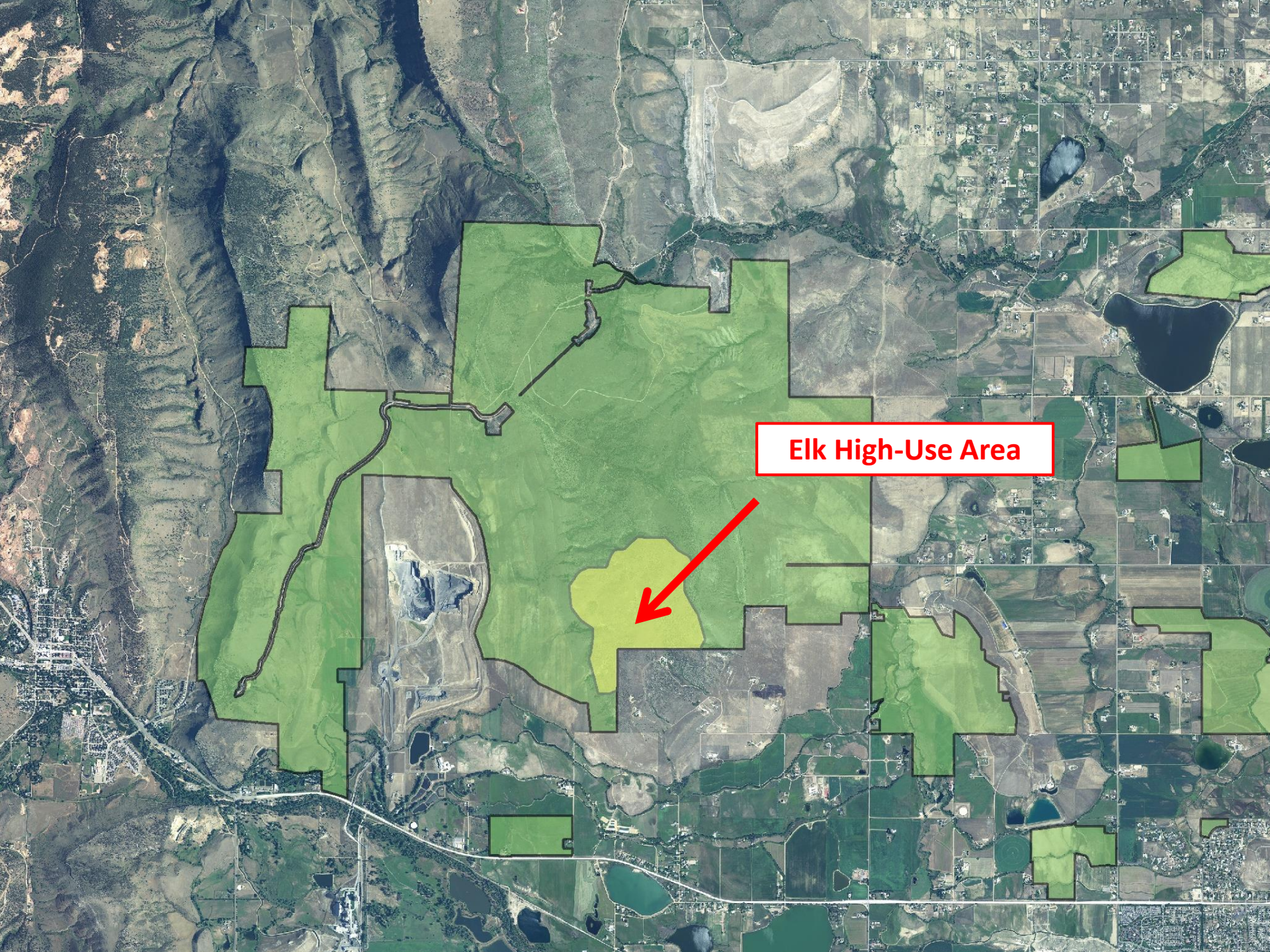
Population Estimate

Rabbit Mountain Elk Counts & Population Projection



Rabbit Mountain Elk Collar GPS Locations 3-6-2015 to 4-19-2016





Elk High-Use Area

Resource Damage



Mountain Mahogany



Rabbit Mountain elk herd impacts



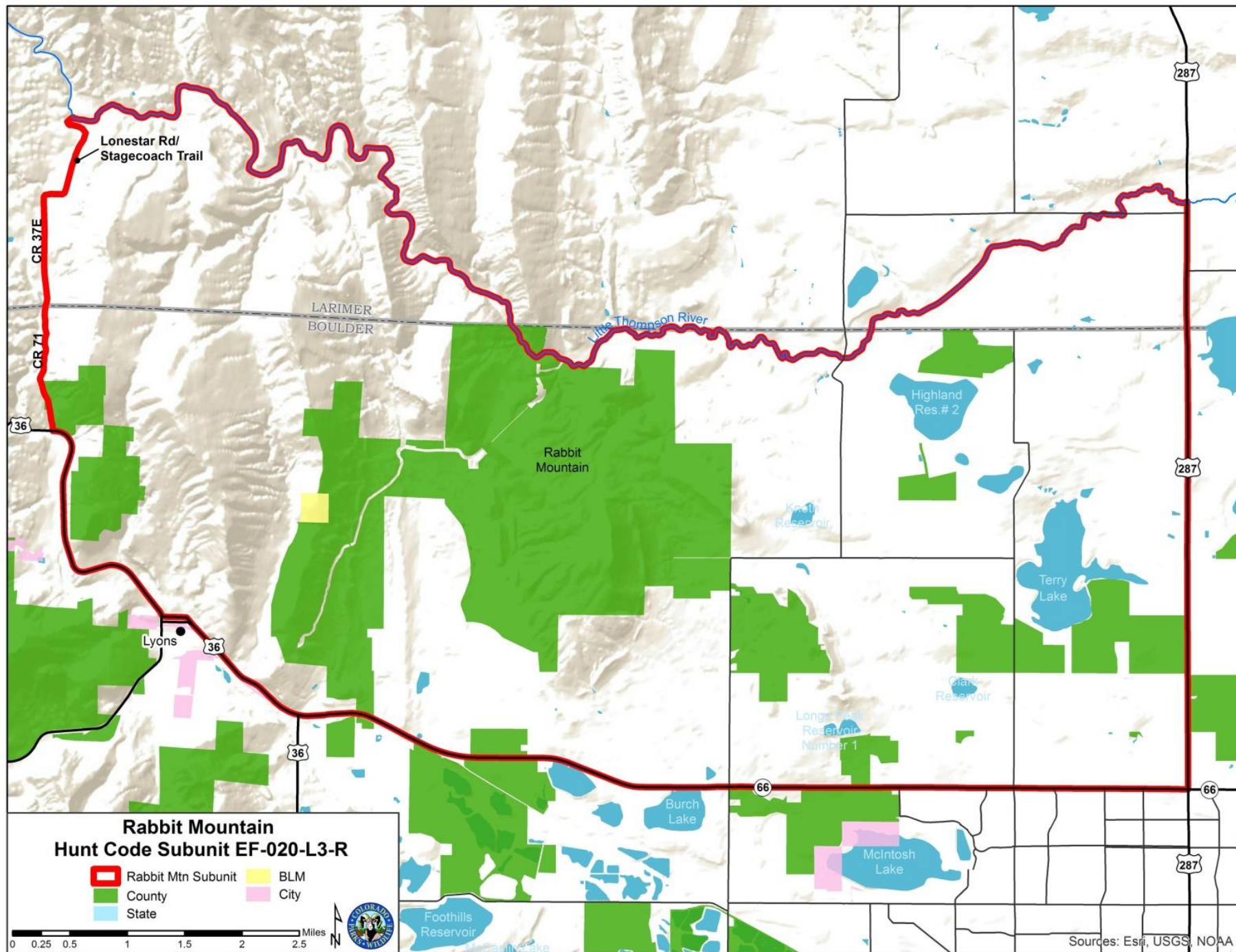
Rabbit Mountain elk herd impacts



How we got here?

- CPW created subunit in 2015
- Hazed for a year
 - Continue on limited basis
 - No significant reductions in population





List of Experts Consulted

- John Mack – Supervisory Biological Scientist, RMNP
- Ben Bobowski – Chief of Resource Stewardship, RMNP
- Ryan Monello – Natural Resource Specialist, RMNP
- Tim Schetter – Natural Resources Director, Metroparks Toledo
- Anthony DeNicola – CEO, White Buffalo
- Stewart Breck – Research Wildlife Biologist, APHIS/NWRC
- Doug Eckery – Assistant Director, APHIS/NWRC
- CPW and BCPOS wildlife biologists and staff

Goals of Elk & Vegetation Management Plan

Approved in August 2017

- 1) Reduce resource impacts
- 2) Reestablish migration/reduce elk concentration
- 3) Reduce long-term population to 30-70
- 4) Reduce private land impacts



- **Fertility Control**
 - Not approved for elk by EPA
 - Expensive, not feasible
- **Fencing**
 - High value wild lands
 - Impractical for farms
- **Culling**
 - Expensive (\$900 - \$4500/animal)
 - No state method for request/approval
 - Unpalatable
 - Long-term maintenance
 - No behavioral changes
 - Does not target issue of refuge



Adaptive Management Strategy

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& RECREATION](#)[PROPERTY
& LAND](#)[ROADS
& TRANSPORTATION](#)[ENVIRONMENT
& SUSTAINABILITY](#)[SAFETY
& LAW](#)[LICENSES, PERMITS
& RECORDS](#)

RON STEWART PRESERVE AT RABBIT MOUNTAIN ELK & VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

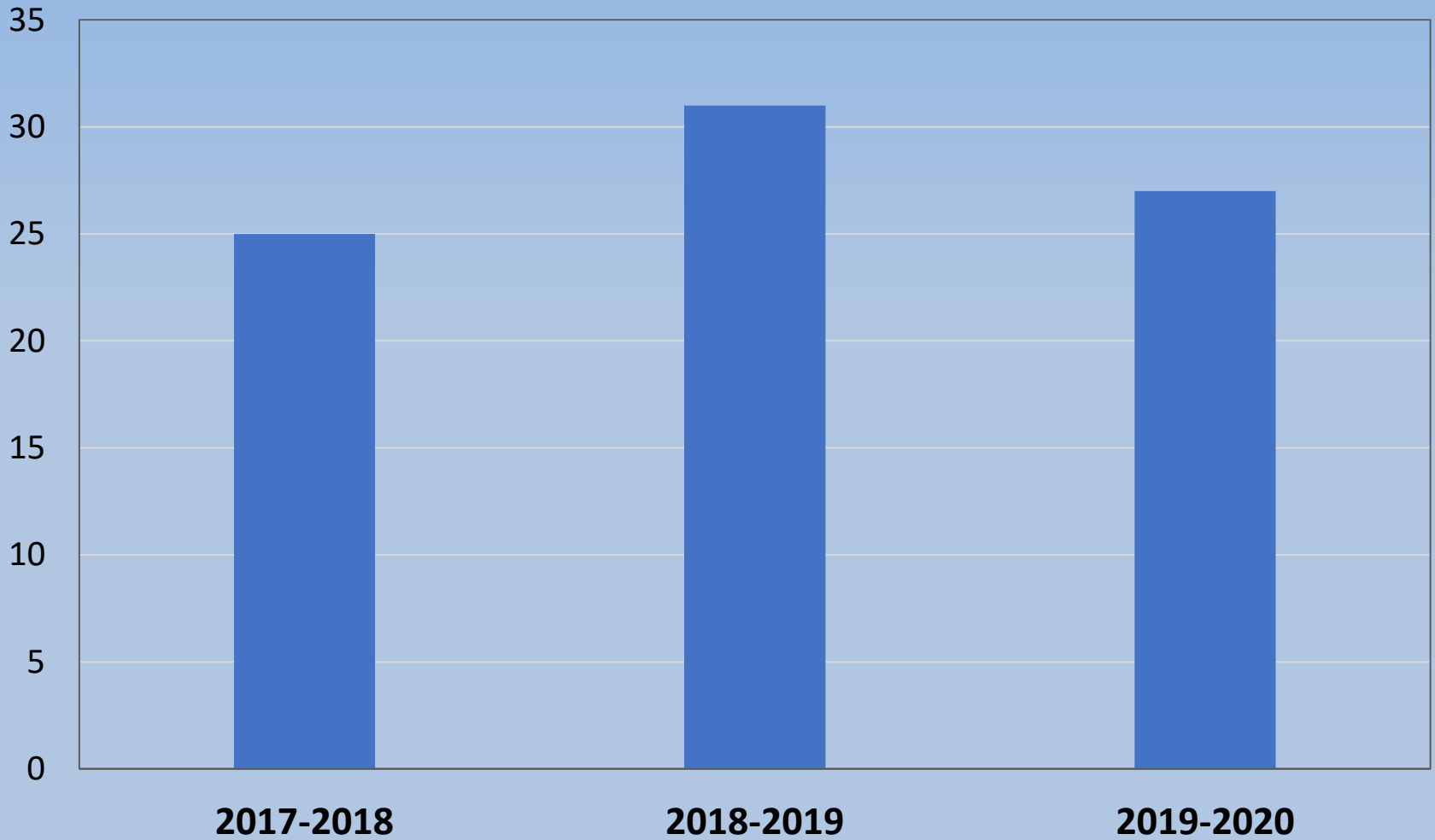
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- 1) Data collection (elk population/movements and vegetation)
- 2) Fencing of core use areas
- 3) Hazing outside of calving season
- 4) Limited hunting of antlerless only elk

3-YEAR PROGRAM

Total BCPOS Harvests

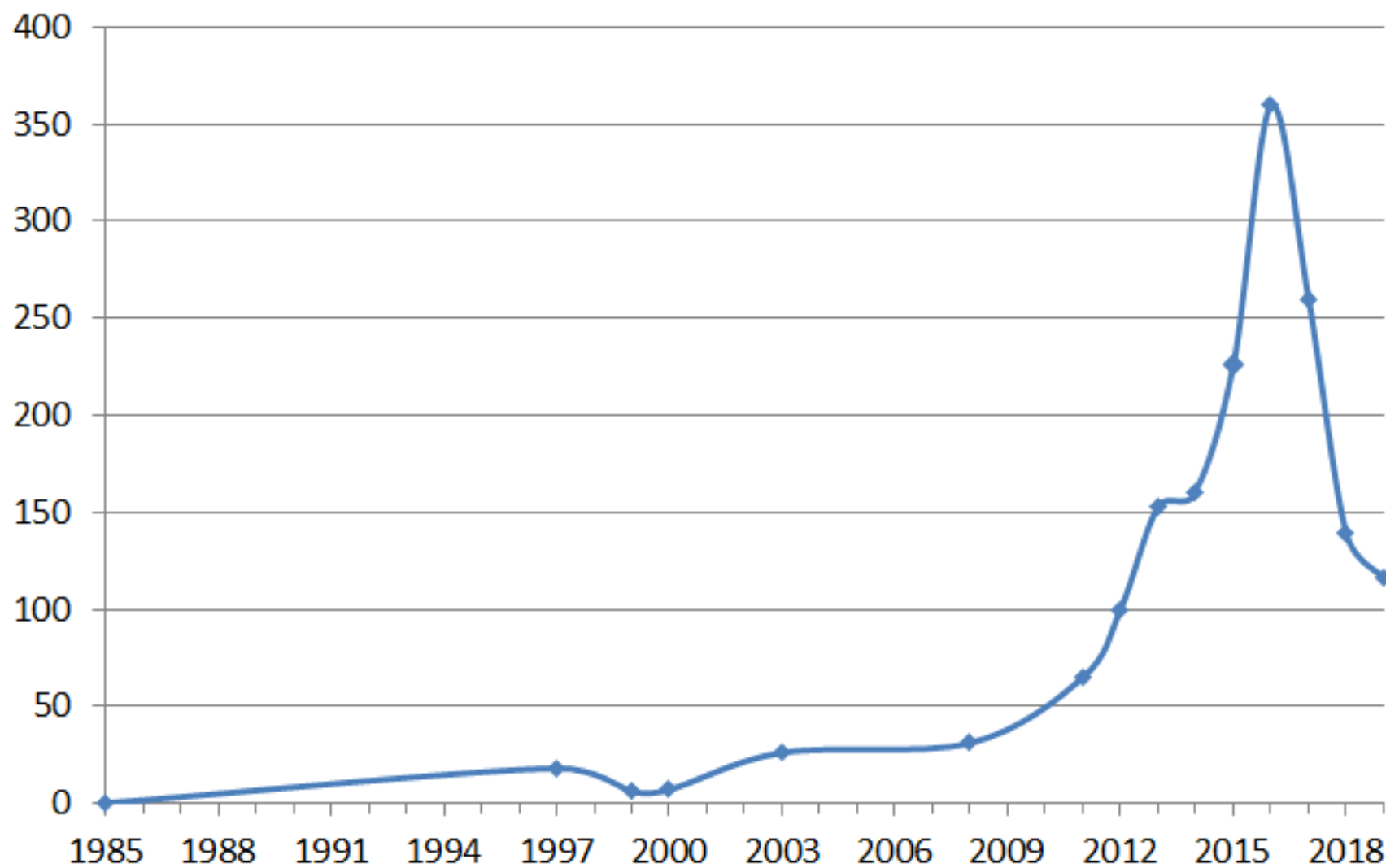


- 55-60 total sub-unit/year



12-20 before management action

Rabbit Mountain High Counts



Ground Counts

360 High count pre-hunt

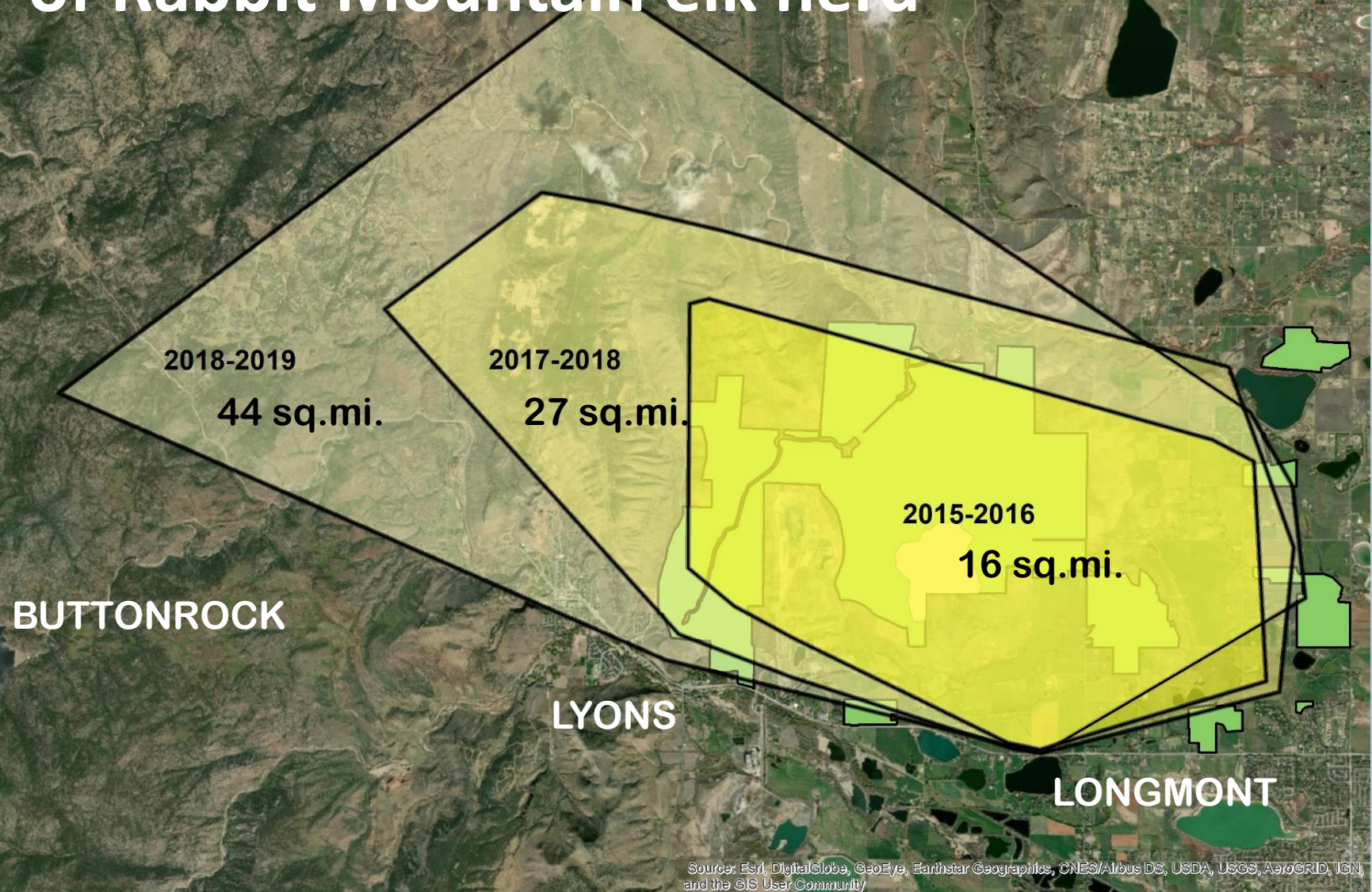
260 High count 2017-2018 season posthunt

139 High count 2018-2019 season posthunt

120 Most recent count 2019-2020 season

GOAL 30-70 ELK

Expanding home range of Rabbit Mountain elk herd



Proposal

- Continue management to reach goal
- Request for 5-year extension
 - Adaptable – days/week, hunters, months
- Data collection
- 30 of 39 (77%) approve extending management plan



POSAC

- February 27 Presentation
- 4 people spoke
- POSAC approved the plan 7-0

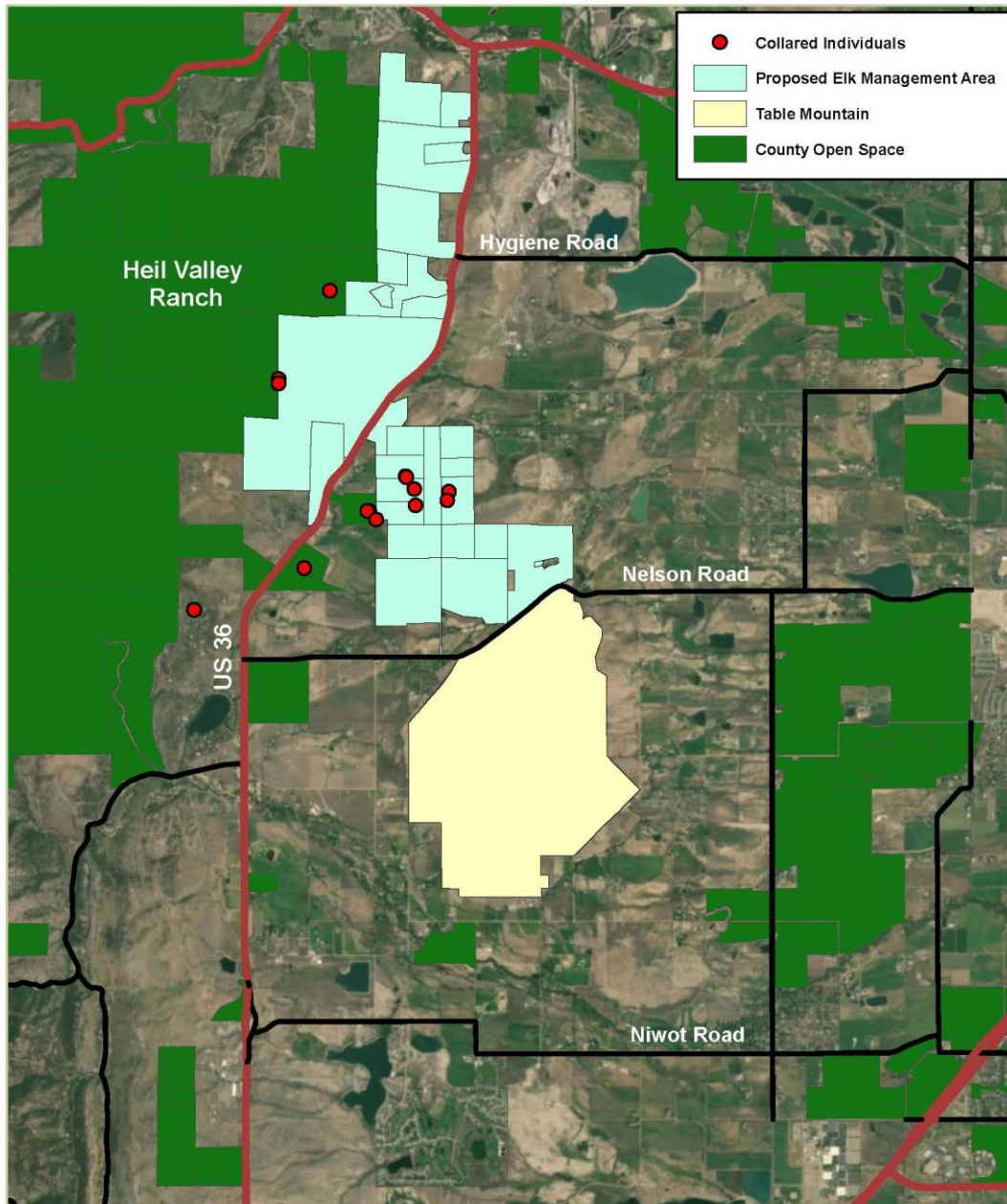


Questions



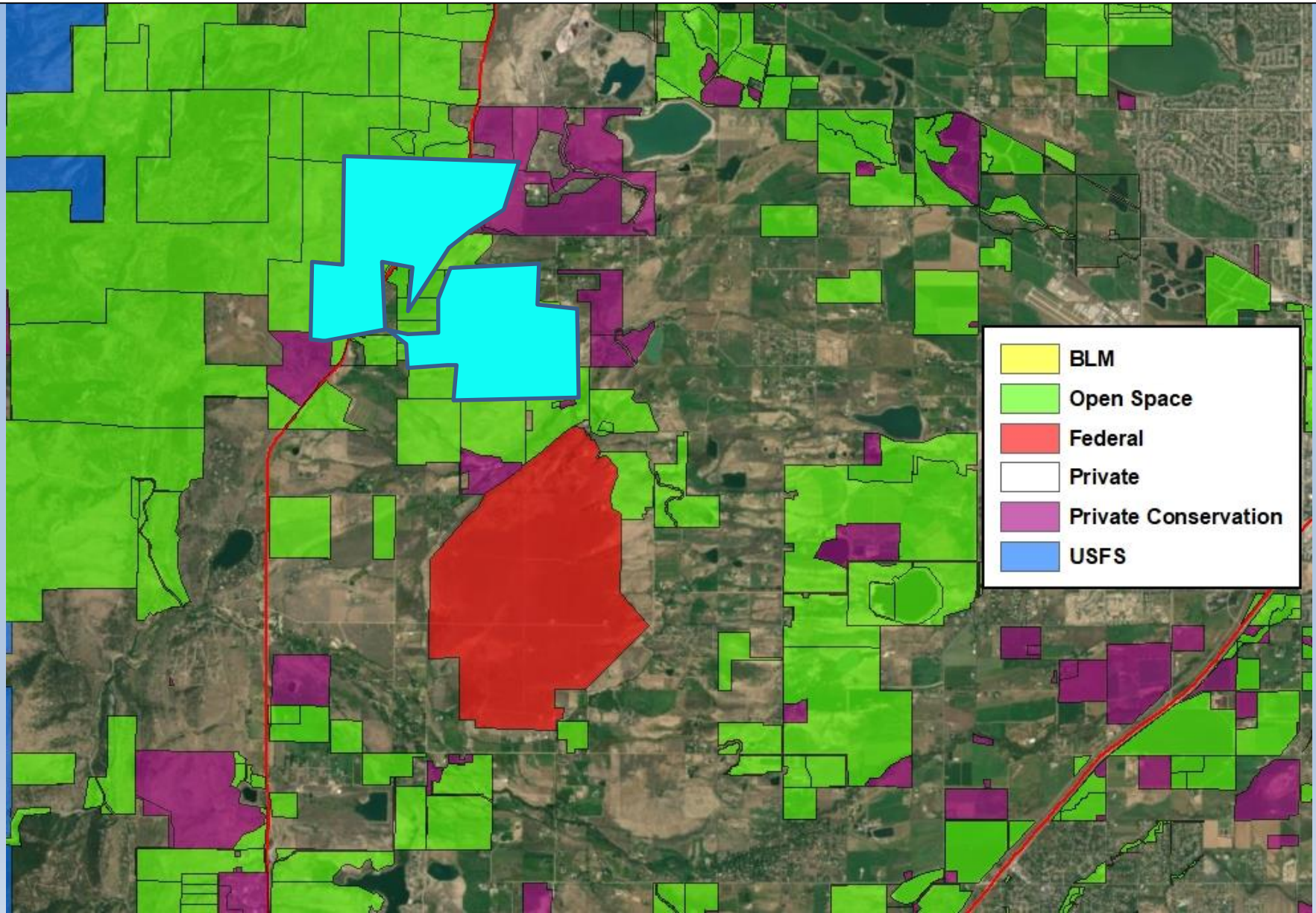
Red Hill Elk Herd





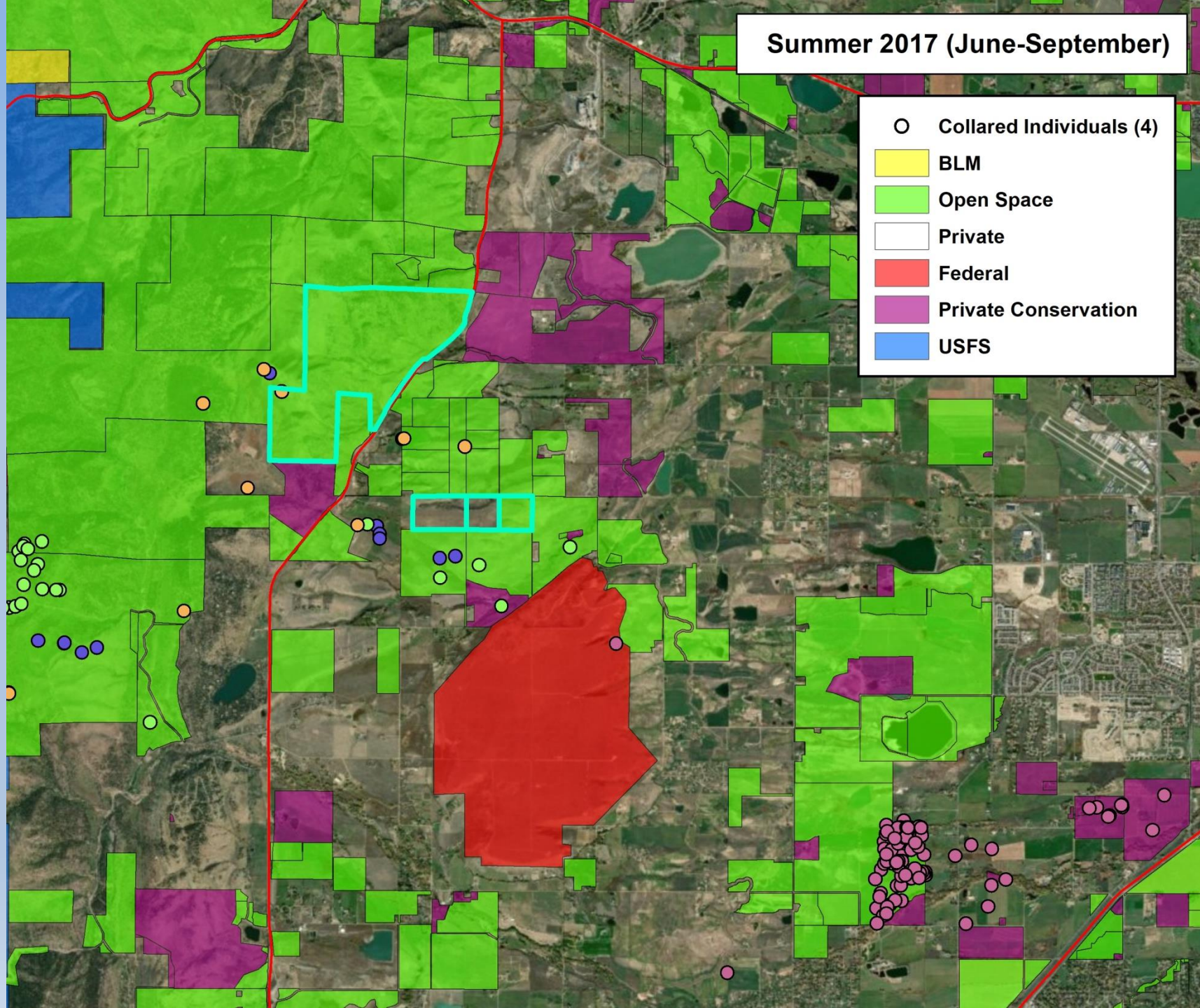
**Summers
1997 – 2005**

Changes in land ownership and management have caused a change in elk distribution and a refuging situation



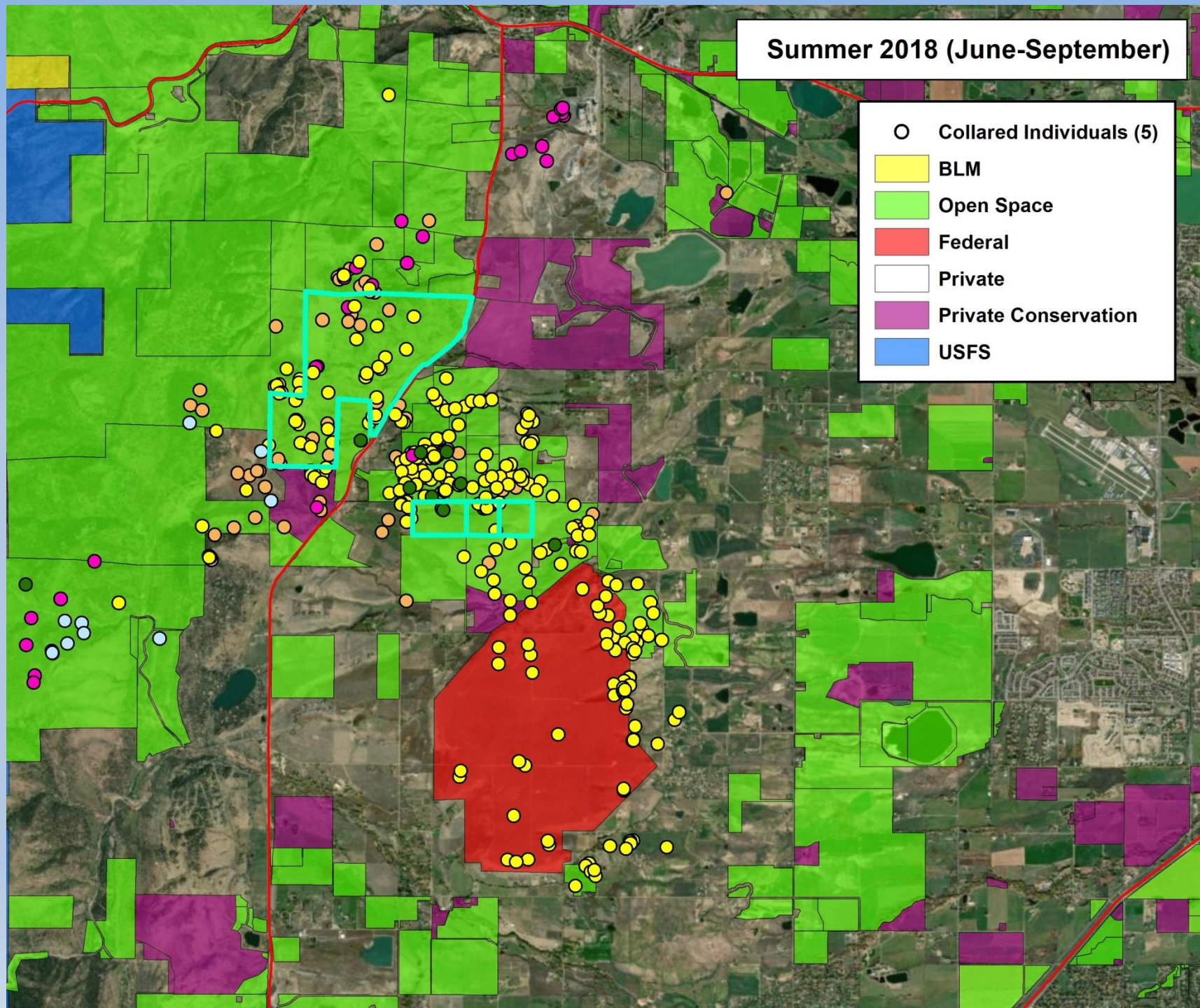
Summer 2017 (June-September)

- Collared Individuals (4)
- BLM
- Open Space
- Private
- Federal
- Private Conservation
- USFS



Summer 2018 (June-September)

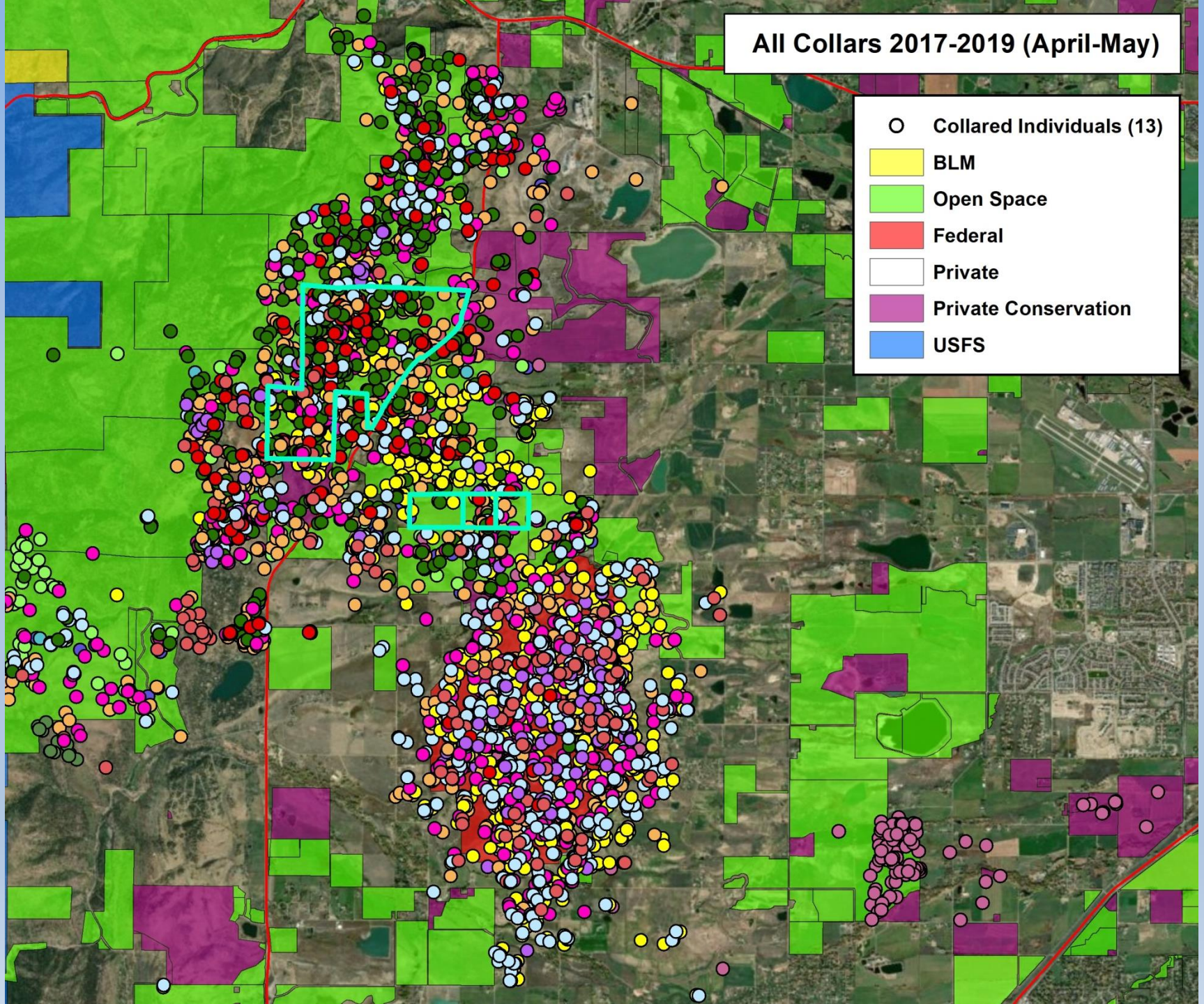
- Collared Individuals (5)
- BLM
- Open Space
- Federal
- Private
- Private Conservation
- USFS



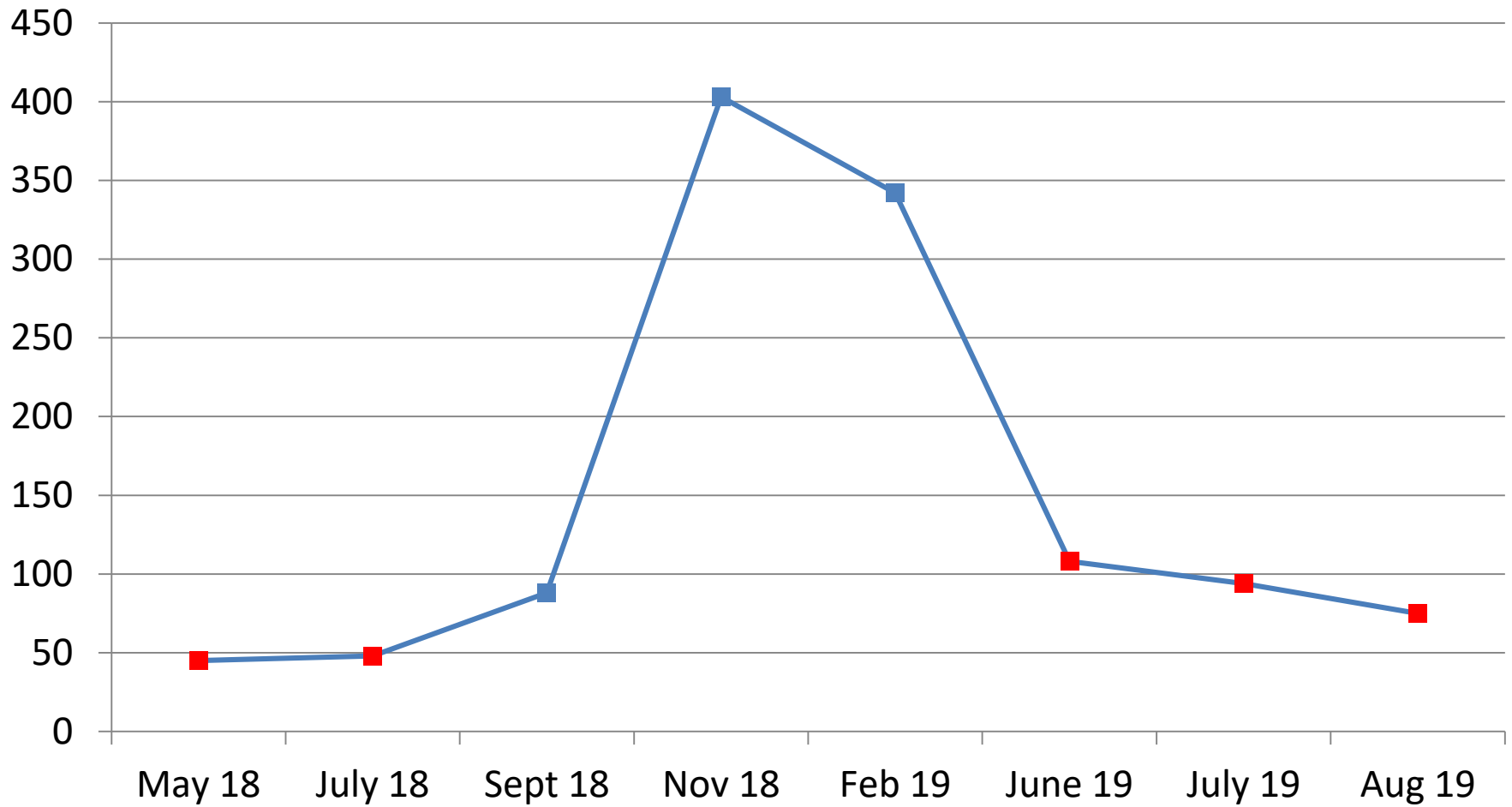
3 Collars, June - Sept 2019



All Collars 2017-2019 (April-May)



2018-19 Red Hill Elk Surveys



POS Issues

- Resident elk herd
- High biodiversity area at risk
- POS tenant issues
 - Tenants can't hunt and need special permission to allow hazing
 - POS staff hazed on leased land



Public Safety Issues

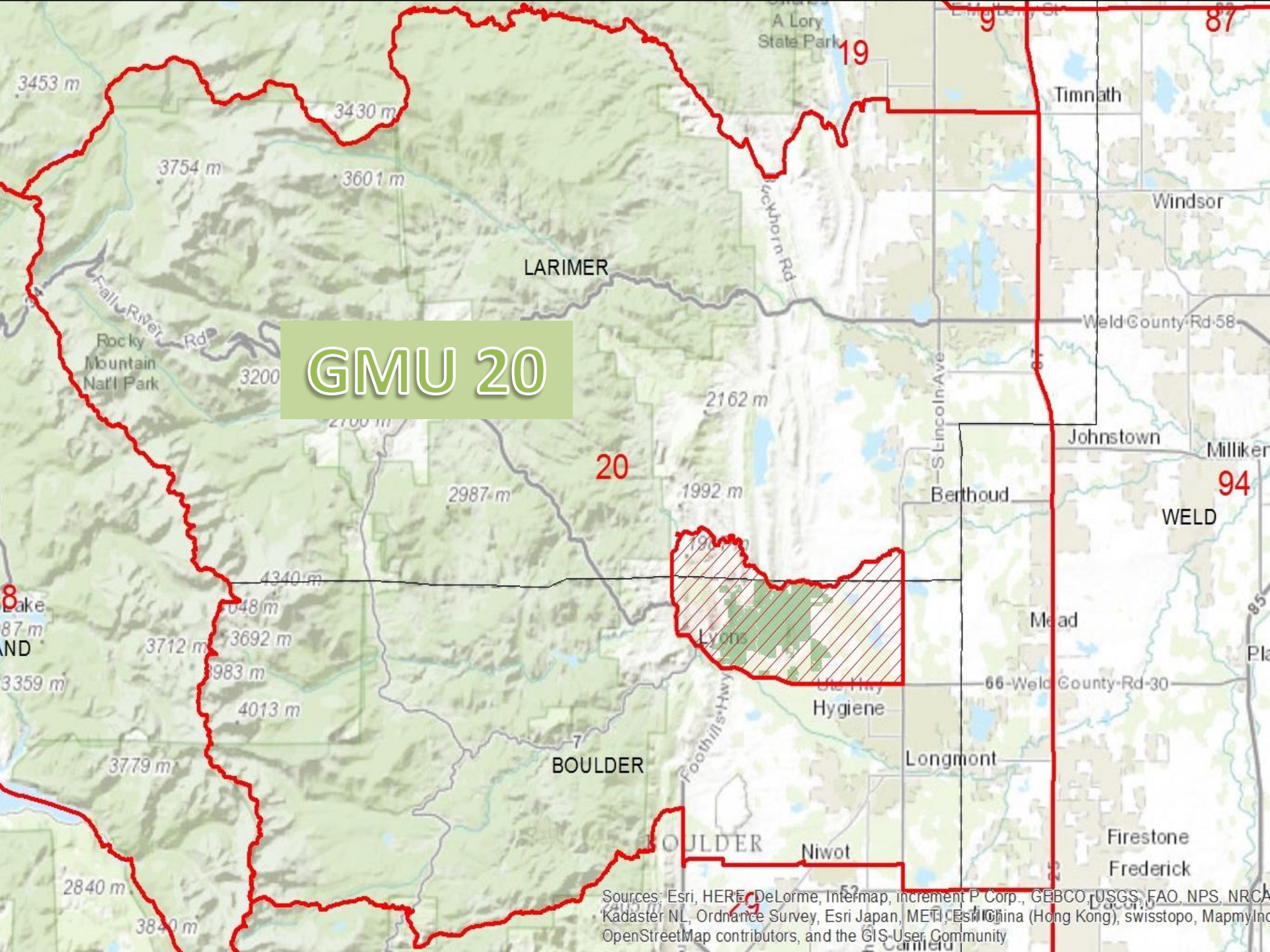
- 86 strikes since 2005 on US 36
- Nelson Road and 63rd Street



Private Land Issues

CPW Management

- **Growing resident elk herd**
- **Complaints – 8 (plus open house)**
- **Damage claims – \$4,500 from 1 claim**
 - **Plus ornamental and specialty crop damage**
 - **More claims expected**
- **Game damage tags – 32 issued, 3 harvests**
- **Working with POS, US Dept. of Commerce and soon, OSMP**

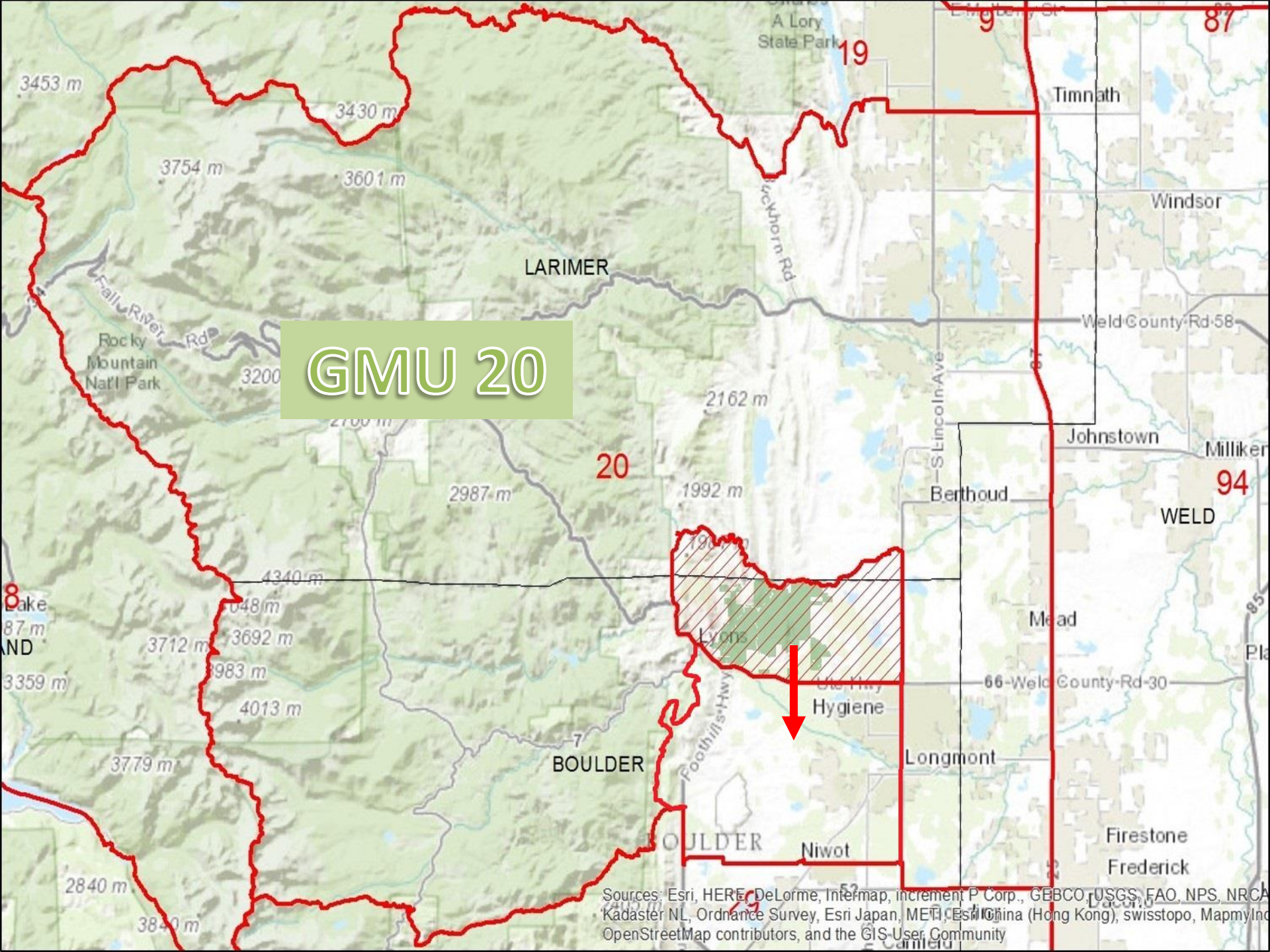


GMU 20

20

94

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



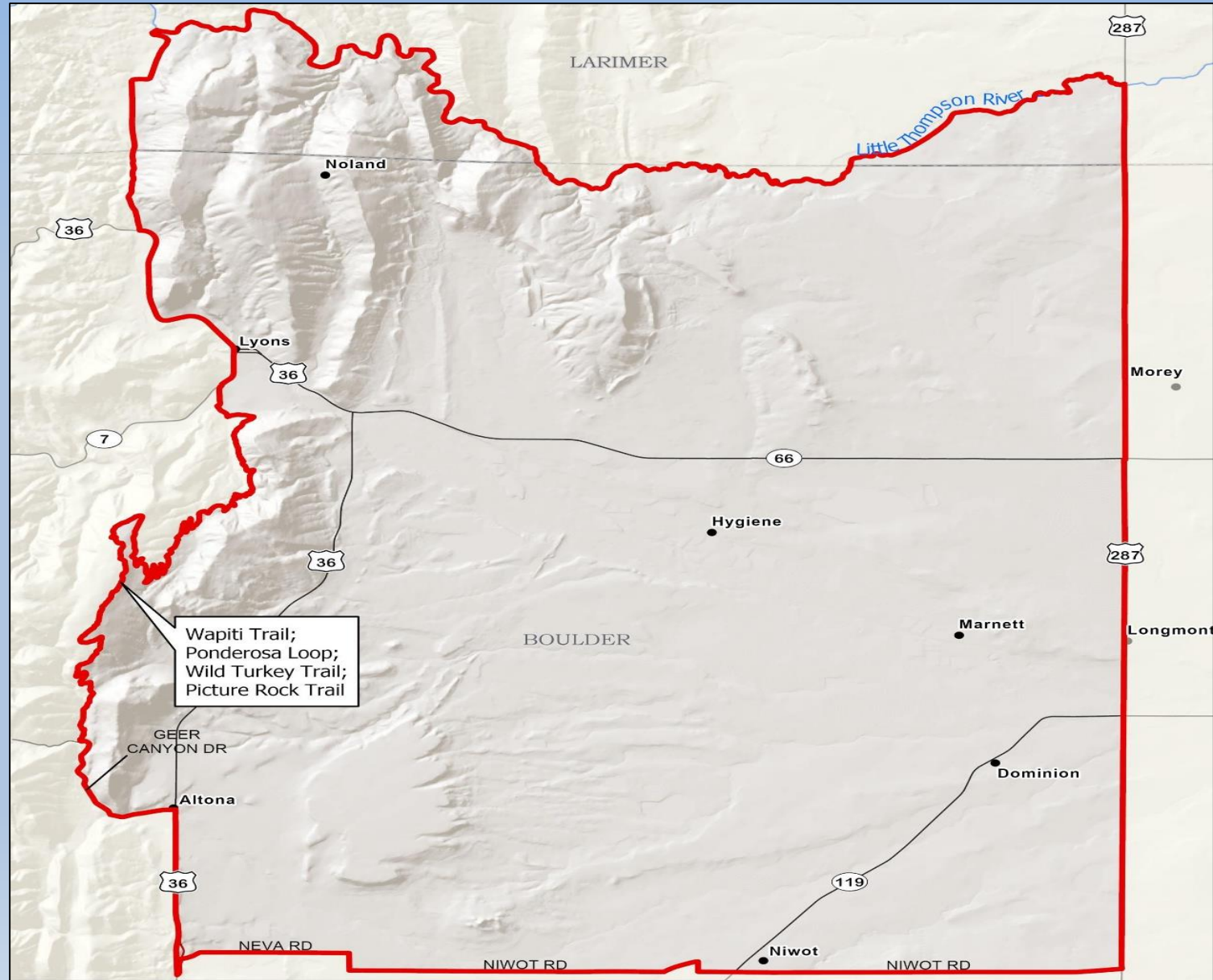
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Expanded Subunit Boundary



Public Input

November 2019 POSAC meeting

- Neighbors elk damages
- Public support managed hunting
- Neighbors concerns: hunting next door
- Oppose hunting on open space



Communications

- Elk management website – boco.org/elk
- Notecard mailer to all residents within buffer of Rabbit Mountain and Red Hill elk management area
- Two press releases (open house and draft plan)
- Posts to BCPOS Twitter and Facebook



For Immediate Release
1/29/2020

Media Contact
Vivienne Jannatpour, (303) 678-6277

**Red Hill Elk Herd Management Plan Open House
Wednesday, Feb. 5, in Longmont**

Request for extension of Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain elk management plan will also be discussed.

Public Input

Feb. 5 BCPOS Open House

- 70 people
- Many local landowners and hunters
- No major objections to general management

Initial public comment period online

- 36 of 39 support management of some kind



Draft Plan

Red Hill Elk Management Plan

2020-2025



Submitted to the Boulder County Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee

February 27, 2020

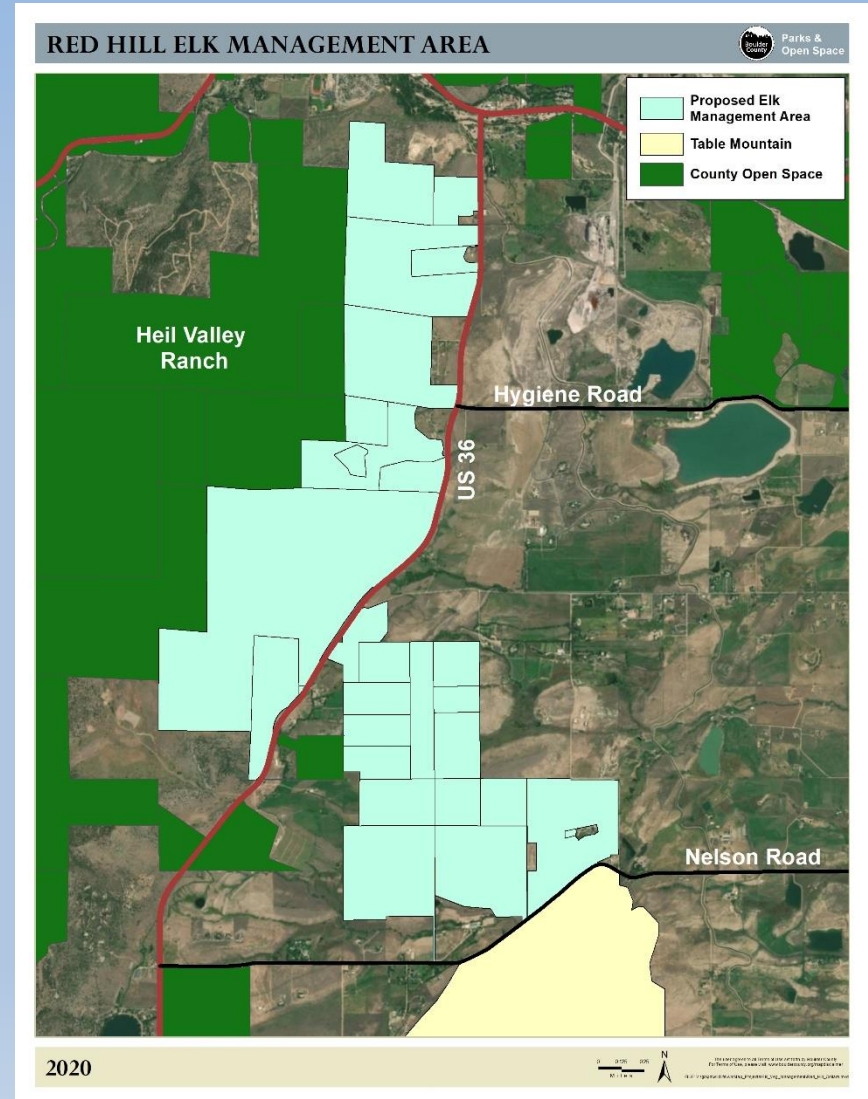
DRAFT

**Posted online Feb. 18
Public Feedback Solicited**

- 1) Prevent impacts to areas of high biodiversity.**
- 2) Maintain a migrating herd with no more than 25 summering individuals.**
- 3) Continue work: agricultural tenants, farmers, landowners minimize elk-human conflicts and elk damage.**
- 4) Facilitate highway safety along US 36 and Nelson Road.**

Draft Plan

- Limited hunting on closed POS properties
- Short season
Aug. 15 – Oct. 31
- Short range weapons
- Strict proficiency, training, and safety boundaries
- Hunt coordinator



Draft Plan

- Hazing during peak migratory period (spring)
- Providing game damage tags to tenants
- Pairing hunters with private landowners



Comments on Draft Plan

Red Hill Elk Management Plan

2020-2025



Submitted to the Boulder County Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee

February 27, 2020

DRAFT

1) 21 online comments

2) 17 oppose

1) Prefer culling

2) Concerned for safety

3) Requesting peer review

Posted online Feb. 18
Public Feedback Solicited

POSAC

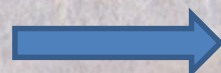
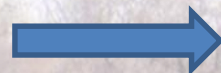
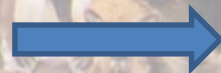
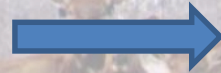
- February 27 Presentation
- 6 people spoke
- POSAC approved the plan 6-1



Addressing Feedback

Feedback

- Adjacent landowners concern of firearms
- Dept. of Commerce should assist
- Elk will move onto private land
- Culling preferred for immediate/safe solution
- Highway crossing



Feedback Addressed

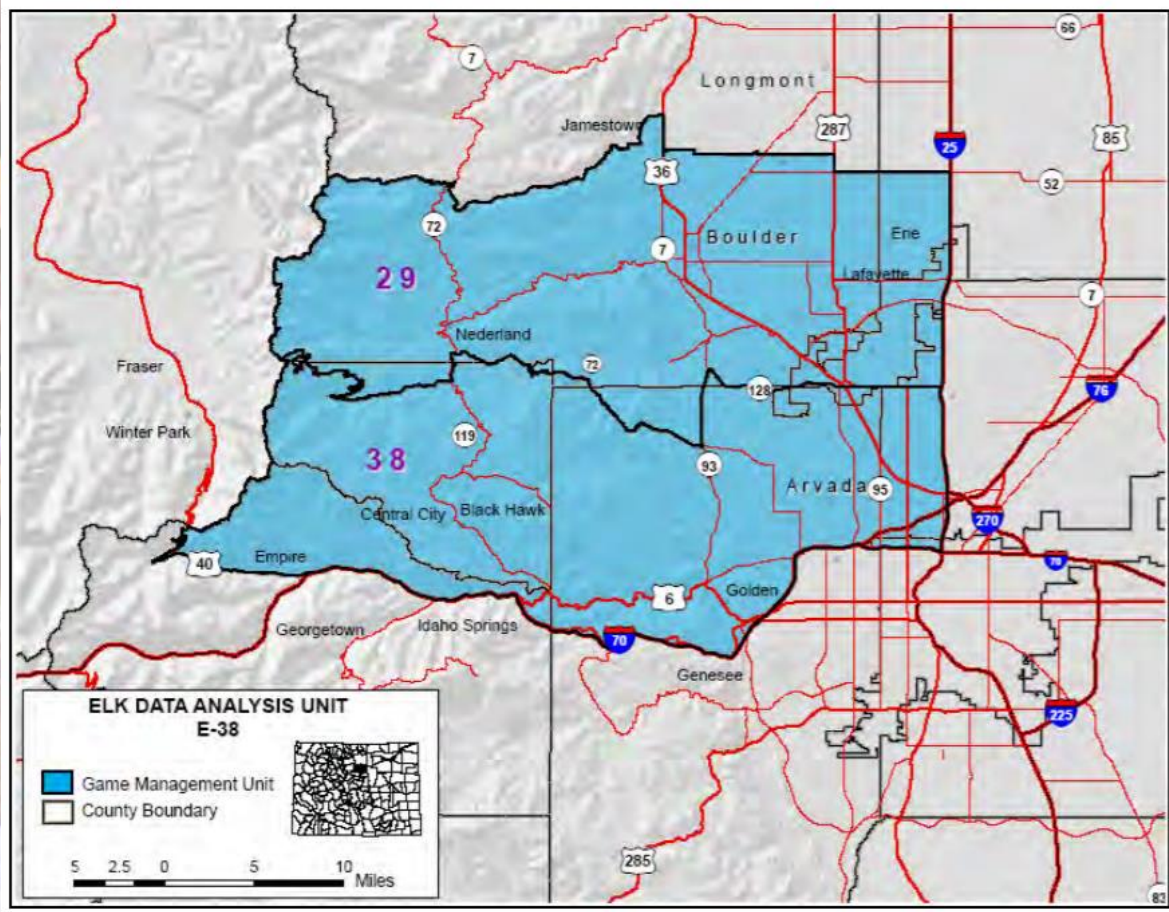
- Proposing short-range weapons /safety boundaries
- Working with Dept. of Commerce and CPW
- Subunit and game damage tags available from CPW
- Approximate costs and obstacles outlined in plan
- Working with CDOT – signs

Into the Future

- Engage Dept. of Commerce and OSMP
- Continue monitoring – radio collars/counts
- Continue monitoring damages
- CDOT wildlife crossing/overpass



Front Range Issue



CPW Clear Creek
Elk Collar Project
Lefthand Canyon
south to I-70

https://drive.google.com/file/d/13Ch_KZ8eaDLePmioq4B52qmX_Ndtt8DX/view

